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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
December 28, 2016

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A New Year's Resolution to Drive Sober, Buckle Up

DUI and seat belt patrols scheduled for final weekend of year

SPRINGFIELD – As 2016 comes to an end, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Illinois State Police (ISP) and nearly 200 law enforcement agencies across the state are making a final push to keep traffic fatalities down during the New Year's holiday weekend. This collaborative effort will include statewide roadside safety checks, seat belt enforcement zones and other patrols focused on the late-night hours.

"The winter holiday season can be one of the most dangerous times on Illinois roads," said Priscilla Tobias, director of IDOT's Office of Program Development. "We hope all motorists will do their part by practicing safe driving behaviors when traveling this weekend. Our aspiration in Illinois is to drive zero fatalities to reality in 2017 and beyond."

Crash data compiled by IDOT shows that in the last five years (2011-15), 49 people died in crashes on Illinois roads during the New Year's holiday period. Twenty, or 41 percent, died in crashes involving at least one driver who had been drinking. During last year's New Year's holiday, 16 people lost their lives, with six fatalities, or 38 percent, as a result of crashes involving at least one driver who tested positive for alcohol.

"DUI remains one of the top contributing factors in fatal crashes around the holidays," said Illinois State Police Director Leo P. Schmitz. "ISP Troopers will be conducting roadside safety checks and roving patrols, looking for and arresting intoxicated motorists. Remember, drive sober or get pulled over."

Some important life-saving tips:

- Don't allow friends or family members who have been drinking to get behind the wheel. Take their keys and help them find a safe way home.
- Designate a sober driver ahead of time or plan to use a taxi, mass transit or your community's designated driver program.
- Promptly report drunk drivers to law enforcement.
- Wear your seat belt and make sure all passengers are safely buckled up. It is your best defense in a crash.
- Avoid distracted driving behaviors such as texting while driving.

Traffic fatalities in Illinois passed the 1,000 mark this year for the first time since 2008. Through Dec. 27, 1,055 people died in crashes on Illinois roads. A total of 998 people died in crashes in 2015. Click [here](#) to view a snapshot of Illinois crash data for 2016.

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